

AUBADE

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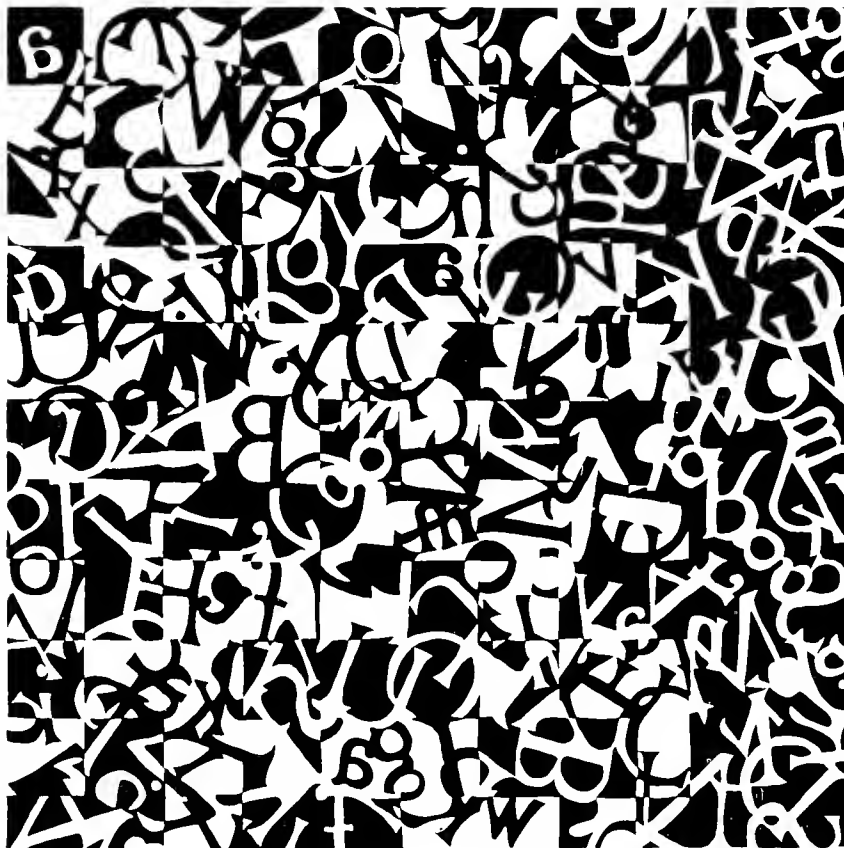
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felt marker

Denise Tuthill

Handbill

Past the rows of faceless grey
buildings and paper sewer-mess
in the gutters, you look for it.
A man shows you his teeth and a knife
and disappears with your wallet.
Still breathing, you shrug.
Were you thinking of pulling back
the shingles and flying
over, peering down on the lives inside
all the gypsies cooking spice
in copper pots, wreathed in magic colored steam?
That would be like pulling a snail from its shell;
it only lays there, ugly and quivering
dying before so many eyes.
You were always the one
to pick candy from the box
then carefully disguise its wounds
putting it primly back in place
when you discovered it was not what you thought.

Finished looking, you choose the house.
Across the street, men playing women
prance coyly, their brown muscled legs
rippling beneath their dresses.
Waving their hands, they talk —
Why they call you chocolate, Chocolate?
Cause I like chocolate, all kinds a chocolate.
On the front steps
drunk Charlie slurs —
Lemme tell ya how my leg came to be lost
Inside, a gift;
thin and pale, with a shock of black hair,
shaking, he pushes the needle in
it comes out, his own blood unnoticed.
After so many silent minutes
he picks up a war-torn guitar
goes to the window
flailing its three strings
screams tender words.
A serenade for Chocolate.

Kate Demarest

Untitled

Sunlight invaded the room relentlessly. Luce Borodin arched and stretched like a cat who hasn't made a life decision since back in 1935 when the roads were longer. Or at least cleaner. But this cat didn't know then that he was gonna see the end of his days under a Chevy on that same road. The long one. So he stretched and cursed the sunlight with vehemence.

The water ran rusty in the cracked white sink. The sticky jelly jar from someone's mom's kitchen couldn't hold enough of the rusty stuff to drench the cotton lining in his mouth. The whiskey bottle was holding on to one more drop like a prairie dog fighting his cousin over a little white rabbit. Who knows who won. Prairie dogs all look alike when the sun is that hot and your mouth is filled with cotton. The old bottle lost it against the yellow and grey walls of the rat trap called home.

Some traces of the infinite and short night of last remained. A worn trench coat was still damp from the rain and some cheap tobacco, half of a pastrami sandwich, and a mustard stained napkin fell out of the pocket when the coat was discarded with a great amount of effort. The rats would get the sandwich and the tobacco blended in with the dirt on the floor. The whiskey left traces on a pile of yellowish paper that was curling around an old paperweight that some girl had left on the desk here. You could tell it was a girl's because it had roses and vines and stuff on it just like something you'd see in your grandmother's parlor. Anyway this weight held down what was considered to be the guy's sustenance or means of existence. Yellow and aging like an old bum's teeth, and he was supposed to live on it? He hadn't made a life decision since 1935, just like the cat. In 35 he decided he was going to be a writer.

The yellow stuff was steamy and verbose like the stuff you read in a drugstore on Sunday afternoons when all you can afford to do is read. You could only write so much of that even though you could read it all day. It sat there while he walked the streets and bought liquor and looked for a lady who would make a good heroine. But he never realized that the kind of heroines in those stories can only be good for two things and one of them was not conversation. Therefore it sat while he searched. And drank.

His old fingers, much older than his real age, fondled the paperweight. The sunshine was pouring in like thick syrup and his brain was leaking out his ears. He lifted the paperweight and let the breeze of the city fourteen floors up stir the syrup with his brains and wipe the yellow stuff all over the dirty floor. His sustenance . . .

Instead of buying more cheap whiskey, he bought clean white paper for his typewriter. In his trenchcoat pocket was the old weight from his room. Definitely a girl's. It had roses and stuff . . . but . . . he had to begin a new book, his wallet.

Back in the rat trap he began. "Darkness painted the windows solid on the fourteenth floor of the rat trap. Rain cut silver streaks through the paint and a fair haired maiden sucked the last sips of a white wine spritzer from a tall thin glass. The night weighed heavy on her eyelids and she stretched and yawned like her Siamese back home.

She arched across the desk to stare like a lover at the black outside. The typewriter was tired and so was she. She put her grandmother's paperweight on chapter one and leaned back against the desk. Her feet slipped when she swam deeper into sleep and the paperweight shattered against the dirty floor. The rats wouldn't eat it."

In Mason City, where the roads are clean, the old cat cashed it in under his Chevy.

Susan Mulholland



photograph

Michael Harper

Monday

bored with megatonnage
i avoid mx men from pantex
who sing praise to the new god on my
old sony.

dick clark interrupts;
only he remains ageless
my mother remembers.

she prays occasionally
(her once being a devout catholic)
but newspapers now say
st. peterpaullukelinus is unemployed
and living frugally
on his pension.

Richard Hutting

i am not one

i am not one
for uncharted seas
or shifting sands

Stout Cortez's thrill is lost
on my rubber-soled spirit.

i look for footprints
in the snow or sand
over grey ice

(Beware of men who have scars
and glance restlessly away),

for sorrow is wet
and bruised from time
spent raising flags

to resentful winds

C Zavrel

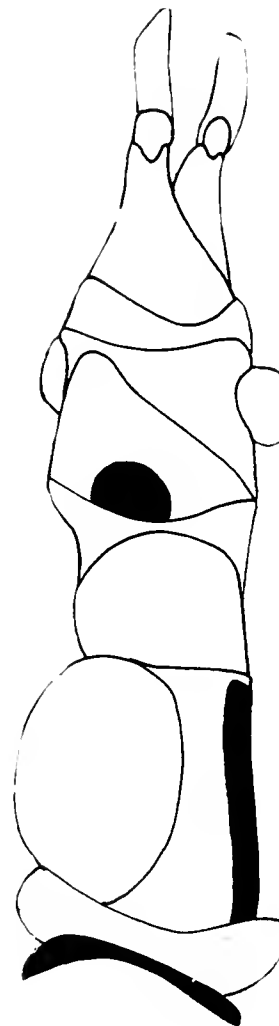
Pallor Manor

Tongues of sweat skid
from attenuated recumbent limbs.
At the temple, a vein
(Phlebas the Phoenician merchant in her temple)
courses under lambent skin.

Heavy-lidded, he found her,
Venus febriculosa rising,
traced the sweat on her semi-conscious thigh,
lingered,
and filled her tub with ice.

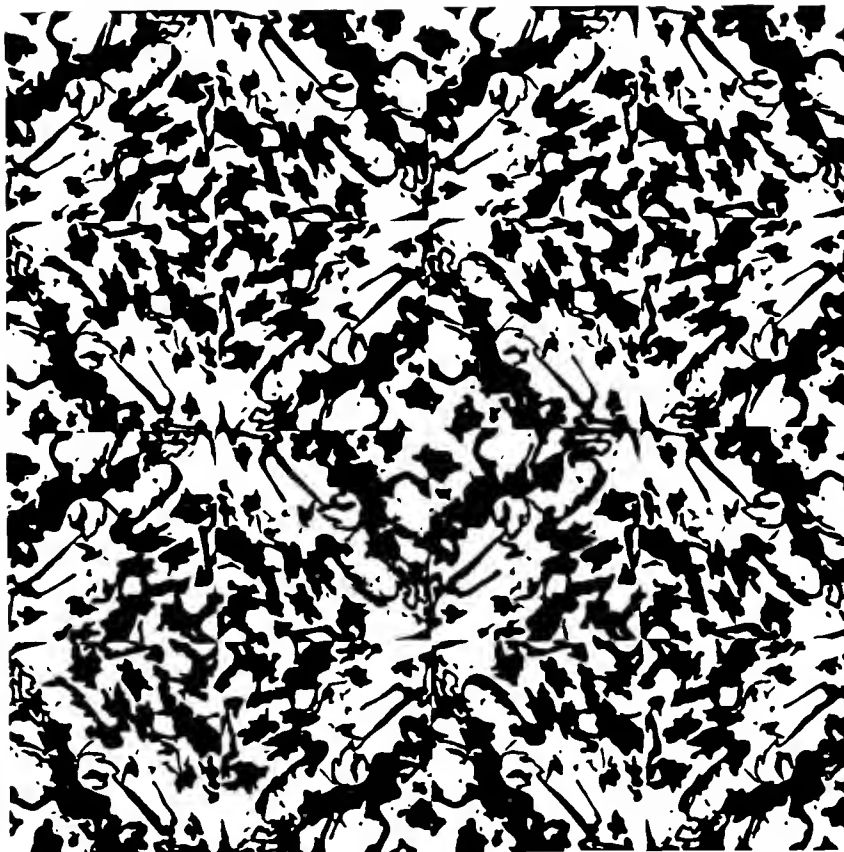
He brought her blood oranges
and cooling white towels in the mornings.
Campari laced with juice through the nights.
One morning he found her,
sanctuaried
in a bare, ruined shower.

Genine Lentine



Priapis I
ink

Paul C. Muick



ink

Gail Giampaoli

Poetry 101

for example

though bat ((bat), n. coming
from the Celt)
may be any stout stick
club or cudgel
hence baseball bat
or bat (bat), v.t. is to wink
blink, flutter or flinch
not to mention those
furry bodied mouseous membraned
mammals
(and not counting bats in the belfry
blind as a _____ and not to _____ an eye)

that is denotation
of the dictionary
next,
connotation
of the mind

connotation
could as calmly connect
bat with baseball, bataan, battery
vampire, venom, drunks, dracula
and dear Aunt Mary who just loved
mickey mantle.

Michael Joyce

Pound Note

And again the bassoons.
Post Hulme-ously
we delve into
mosaic negatives.
Just a few don'ts, he said,
pelting rain slashed
and the voices would not cease.
Now the oboes,
reeds on banks of string-rivers
forgetting their wooden past.

Anne M. Baber

Untitled

When you are born
the right hemisphere
of your brain
tells your flesh to fight
so that you can continue
to bathe
in the water.

But they want you
and, being much more powerful,
they pull you out
and upside down
you immediately recognize
the voice which once hummed
to you
and for you
when you were inside.

The smell of chemicals, urine, and blood
overcomes you
as your eyes follow
sterile figures dressed in green-blue,
value two, chroma five,
which you don't know
is the same color of the Plymouth Belvedere
which will take you
on your first automobile ride.

Subtle vibrations
rush from brain to toe
while you feel the viscous blood
which clothes you
unite with sweat from your mother's legs
just before
they strip you naked
and place you atop her right breast
so that you can sleep
in the company
of rhythmic breathing.

Tina Bowyer



photograph

Michael Harper

Solstice

1

Where is
The English sun
In winter?
So low
Solo
Sol
O —
Always eyelevel
Only eyeful —
No warpaint will arouse
This defeated chief,
Our nice white mouse;
No fiery chariot will advance
This pale snail;
No minted coins will engage
Its peculiar heater.
Yet your solitary ways
Are comradely
These winter days,
O Sol, old rind,
So low, solo.

2

Through these long eves
The English moon
Is our naughty mum,
Pitching her pearl atop
The sailing pole
That makes the aretic midnight
Into radiant noon.

3

Would you then
Be a beacon
O moon, for the sinking sun
And over the flood send an S O S
To Sol, so low, solo?

Dan Dervin



graphite

Drema A. Setti

During A Storm

Simple, four-part harmony:
Do you hear it in the breeze?
Low, earth-shaking thunder
Replaces my father as bass.
He used to sing guttural dirges
To me as I slept: my head
In his lap as he sat
On the porch swing in the evening
Watching the day die as usual
And contemplating things
Not meant for me.

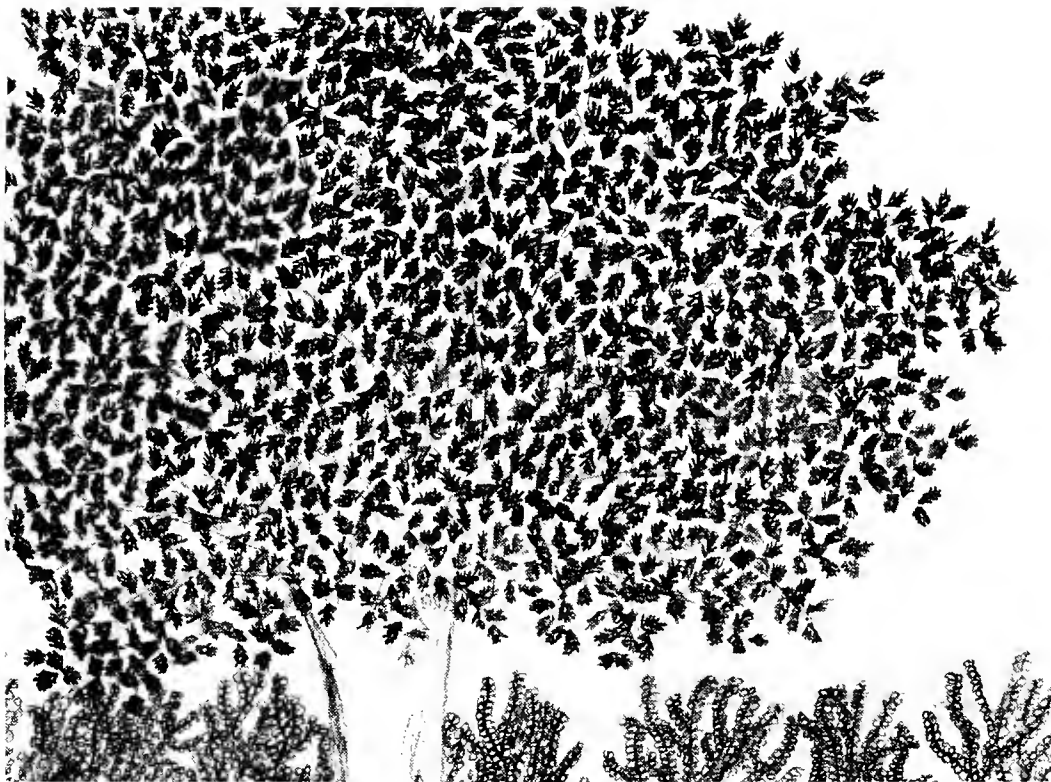
Wind howls relentlessly
In the gables and rain pounds
The bare cement walk outside.
These sounds replace Uncle Bob
And my older brother Tom as
Baritone and tenor, respectively.
The memories of both have faded
As most classroom reveries do
When officious teachers call on you
To face classmates and friends
To define **caprice**.

The screams of my baby sister
At three in the morning, telling
The whole neighborhood that she
Is hungry or frightened by
The dragon-like bolts of lightning.
Remind me of my mother
Who completed the quartet
With her simple, soothing soprano.
I remember well how consistently
She rose to pack my lunch in the morning
When I was the baby of the house.

Harmony—the simultaneous combination Of tones; pleasing to the ear.

I found this in my dog-eared
Pocket dictionary yesterday.
Almost two decades have past
Since I slept in my father's lap.
How long since mom packed my lunch?
I hardly remember Uncle Bob now,
But Tom drops in occasionally.
It's funny how instruments appreciate
With age but get out of tune if neglected.

Bruce Van Horn



graphite

Brenda Ziegler

Summer at the Jardin D'Hiver

In winter, summer flowers grew to rot.
In summer, nothing. We paid six francs
to see Droseraceae, dead flies
touched to spiny lips, gluey tendrils waving
unstuck wings. The rest was dead, or waiting
like the Joshua tree, one cell holding water
until rain. Outside, all hung in the day
before harvest. Inside, a cat slept
beneath a closing palm. Walking down
the dormant rows, over the emptied
lagoon, we said little, each having held
the other. Another time we would have broken
windows to let in air and coax
all upwards; in winter
this would be the new heart, light flaming
through glass on steel to delicate
flowers opening. Beauty is never enough
expressed, nor does it spare us, yet what inside
plainness demanded something other
than a glass dome over
extravagant forced blooms?

Richard McCann



collage

Kathy Crocetti

Restaurant

The toad-bellied man squats at the table
discussing the second mortgage.
His chameleon skinned wife
sits paying the price for staying one color 28 years.

Outside the window people prowl
the lifeless black tundra
in their Cougars and Jaguars.

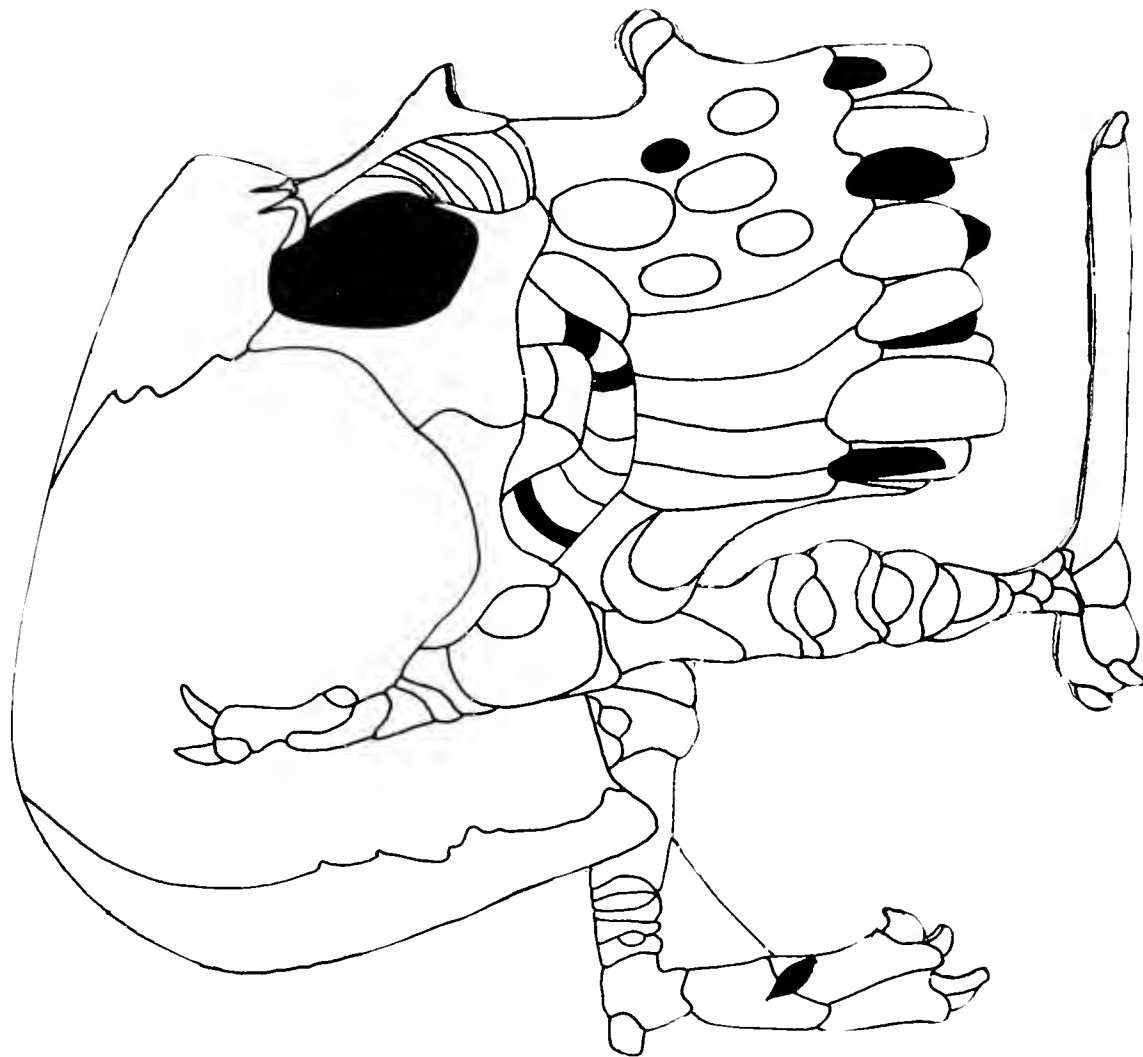
Inside the restaurant lies a plate of fresh eggs
shipped two weeks ago from an egg factory in Pennsylvania
which houses 2000 chickens and a conveyor belt

The toad bellied man complains his soup is cold
and the waitress apologizes with all the sincerity
of a reflex tired of twitching on demand.

Outside the window clouds gather
with enough rain to wash this earth clean
of all the muddy tramping of padded feet.

Inside the restaurant the toad bellied man, whose ancestors climbed down from the trees
and with that first step
made the world small with self importance,
sits eating.

Scott Stableford



Gorf
ink

Synchronicity 3

Nick D'Amici ran a small slaughterhouse on the Lower East Side. He did all the cutting himself. Every day from 8 to 4, his black rubber overalls ran red liquid. Nick was a small, muscular man whose short, powerful arms effortlessly separated flesh from bone. His meticulous work showed a certain pride. Though he was a capable man, Nick was also a lonely one. But he preferred it that way. Just the skinned animals and him. No arguments. No jealousy.

The sides of beef hung silently in long, cool rows. The only noise was the rumble of refrigeration units on the roof. The knife made no sound as it slipped in and out of the marbled meat. There was no telephone or doorbell. The silence helped his concentration.

Nick worked for hours at a time, quietly carving the white and red cadavers into ever smaller pieces. He measured time by the amount of blood on the cold cement floor. It was just after noon when Nick decided to stop for lunch.

He tucked the sharp steel knife into its worn leather sheath. The chilled air had a fresh smell to it. Nick inhaled deeply and began removing his dirty gloves as he approached the dirty iron sink. The place where bits of once-living animals vanished forever down the drain. Nick bent over the basin; the leaky faucet squeezed out water.

One drop landed on another. Bobby was pouring water out of the bait bucket. Tim sat quietly, pole in hand, on the edge of the pier. Far below, the blue ocean held the tiny red and white bobber and swung it to and fro in a timeless rhythm. The glowing ember sun was near the horizon. Two grey seagulls flew in front of it.

The two boys were alone. Their clothing smelled like the sea, but they wouldn't know it until they got home. Bobby was restless, and began to run up and down the long wooden jetty. Tim noticed a tautness in his line. Then it relaxed. He was reaching for the handle of his reel when it spun out of control. The bobber vanished.

Tim quickly stood up and yelled for Bobby. The line jerked back and forth. Tim's breath quickened as he gripped the cork handle of the pole in his tiny hands.

It's a barracuda, he thought.

The tip of the pole bent sharply. Tim thought it might break off. Then it released, and he began to reel in the line. It pulled back, but he pulled harder. The fish suddenly shot clean out of the water, and dangled just above the surface. Bobby giggled excitedly. Tim just stared, as the beautiful blue fish glistened in the setting sunlight, wiggling on its noose.

“Well don’t just stand there!” cried Bobby.

Tim seemed hypnotized. Bobby hung over the edge of the rusty railing, and pulled on the wet line with his bare hand. The fish moved helplessly upward.

“Hey, what’s wrong with you? Get the knife!” said Bobby.

Tim dropped the pole and scrambled for the knife. Bobby nervously pulled the wet prize ever closer, afraid that it would fly off the hook at any moment.

The creature flipped over the rail onto the weathered boards, darkening them with sea water. Tim fell to his knees and began to stab wildly at the shiny animal. Bobby managed to trap its tail under his foot, and Tim speared it.

Salty blood squirted on white sneakers. Maria panicked. Her grandmother had quite deliberately pulled out the I.V. needle, and now the little blood she had left was pumping onto the floor. The old woman began to quiver, and Maria, very much alone, froze for a moment in the grey light of the room. Mrs. Martinez gagged. Her eyes rolled back. Maria called to her but got no answer.

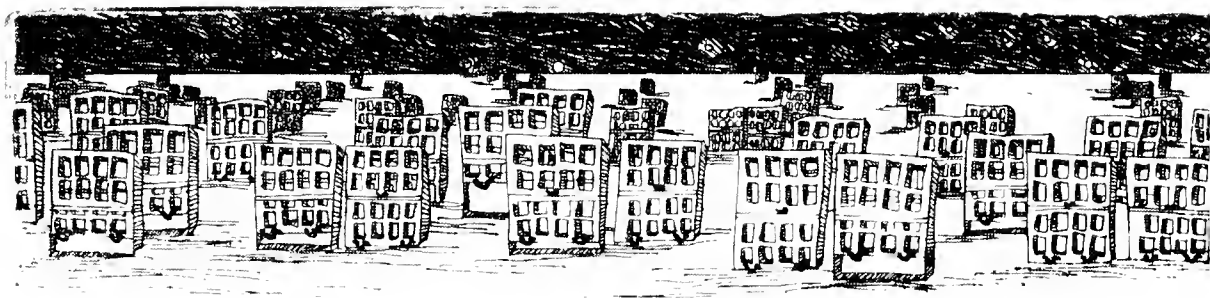
She ran out into the hall, leaving red footprints down the length of it. She screamed. No one was in sight. She busted through two large double doors, and tripped over a row of empty gurneys. She fell at the feet of a man in white.

“Oh God, it’s my grandmother!” she cried. “Please help her. Room 217. There’s blood everywhere. . .”

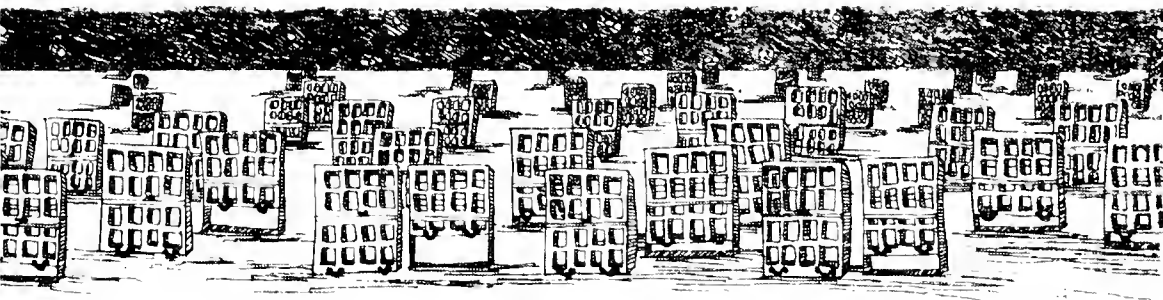
He helped her into a chair and ran down the hall. She watched him go out of sight. Strangely enough, Maria wasn’t crying. She felt dizzy. A wave of nausea swept through her. She thought she might throw up. A couple of deep breaths relaxed her. She looked for something to wipe her sweaty forehead.

Not a towel in sight. He wiped his clean hands on his dingy handkerchief. Nick’s clothes were never quite clean. He did his own laundry. Sometimes the little details escaped him.

Mark D’Oliveira



Windows on a Silent Sea
intaglio



Tina Bowyer

Permeation

My grandfather was always the last to bed.
After we had all wrapped ourselves in linen sheet cocoons
He would sit for long hours
Lost in a fog of his own cigarette smoke
Silently drinking the same iced tea again and again
From an ancient stained cup
The radio muttering muted nothings by his ear.
His eyes glowed in the semi-dark.
When the sky began to show a vague incipient blue
He would creak softly to bed.

I was always the first one up
Stumping dully into the kitchen
Surprising the orange juice with my one-eyed clumsiness.
These mornings there began to be a smell, sickly and bilious
Of something that had sat too long
In thick greasy lumps.
It came from the sink.
Later it lodged in my grandfather's room.

One night I arrived late, bringing pine needles and the wind
In my arms and hair.
I walked past him, never knew he was there —
His eyes no longer glowed as he sat in the dark
They had become cloudy pools, absorbing and absorbed by the blackness.
He no longer dreamed.

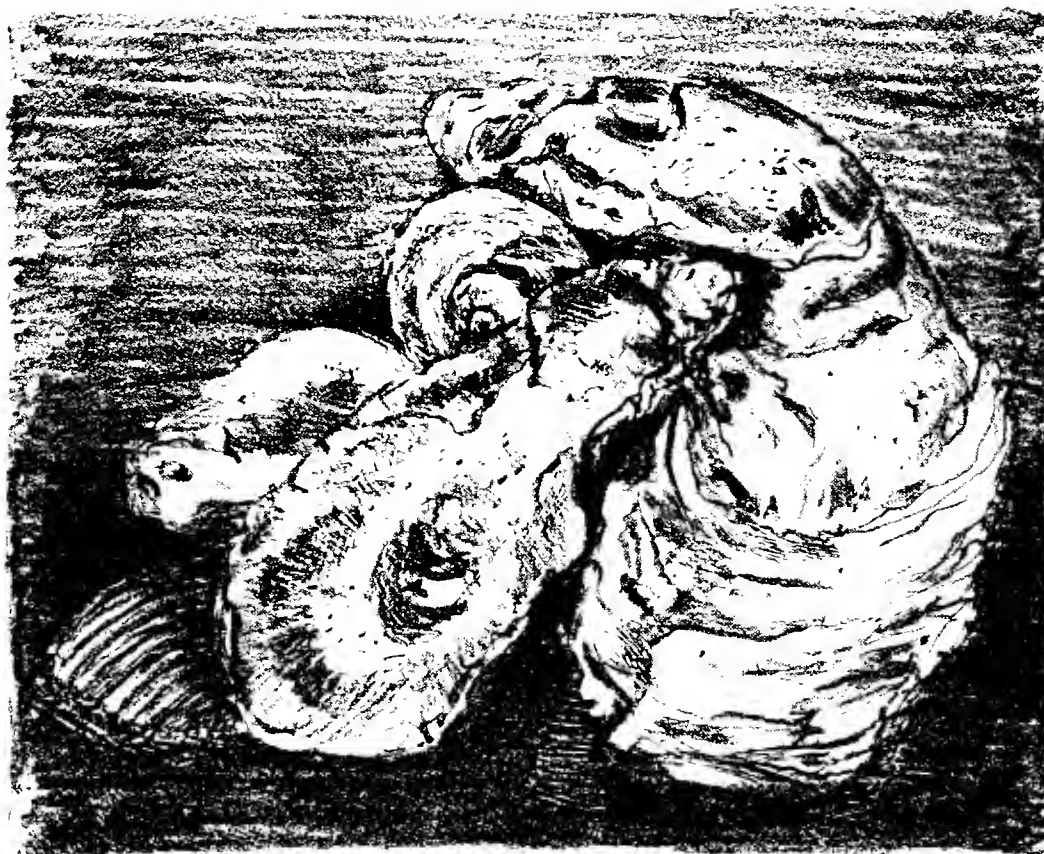
And one Monday afternoon I found that
grey death had crawled out of the sink
At night and wreathed itself around him;
Following into his room, lurked behind the bureau, and in the dresser drawers
Finally settling itself in his lungs
Smothering his dreams and stealing his light.
While we watched, it choked him.

Kate Demarest



An Afternoon of Leisure
woodcut on rice paper

Kathy Crocetti



Shells
lithograph

Peg Waskom

Naming the Animals

under spitless stinging sun
on the finally putrid planet
after the last war
when children's voices
sound no more

and everything man ever
created, altered, changed
is destroyed
only two of opposing flags
survive?

. . . . staring

facing each other
on that deathwatch battlefield
deployed

. . . . staring

shielded razor slit eyes
radiation suits ragged
weapons empty of ammo

. . . . staring

dust and blood
mud-decorated boots
red scar laces

. . . . staring

two, the last generation
the witnesses, the judges
the jury, guilty

. . . . staring

weapon forsaken
glow in the dark
poisoned bodies

. . . . staring

finally, in mirror's reflection
they pick up stones
and with last
strength throw

not at each other
not at the defiled sky
not at the sun

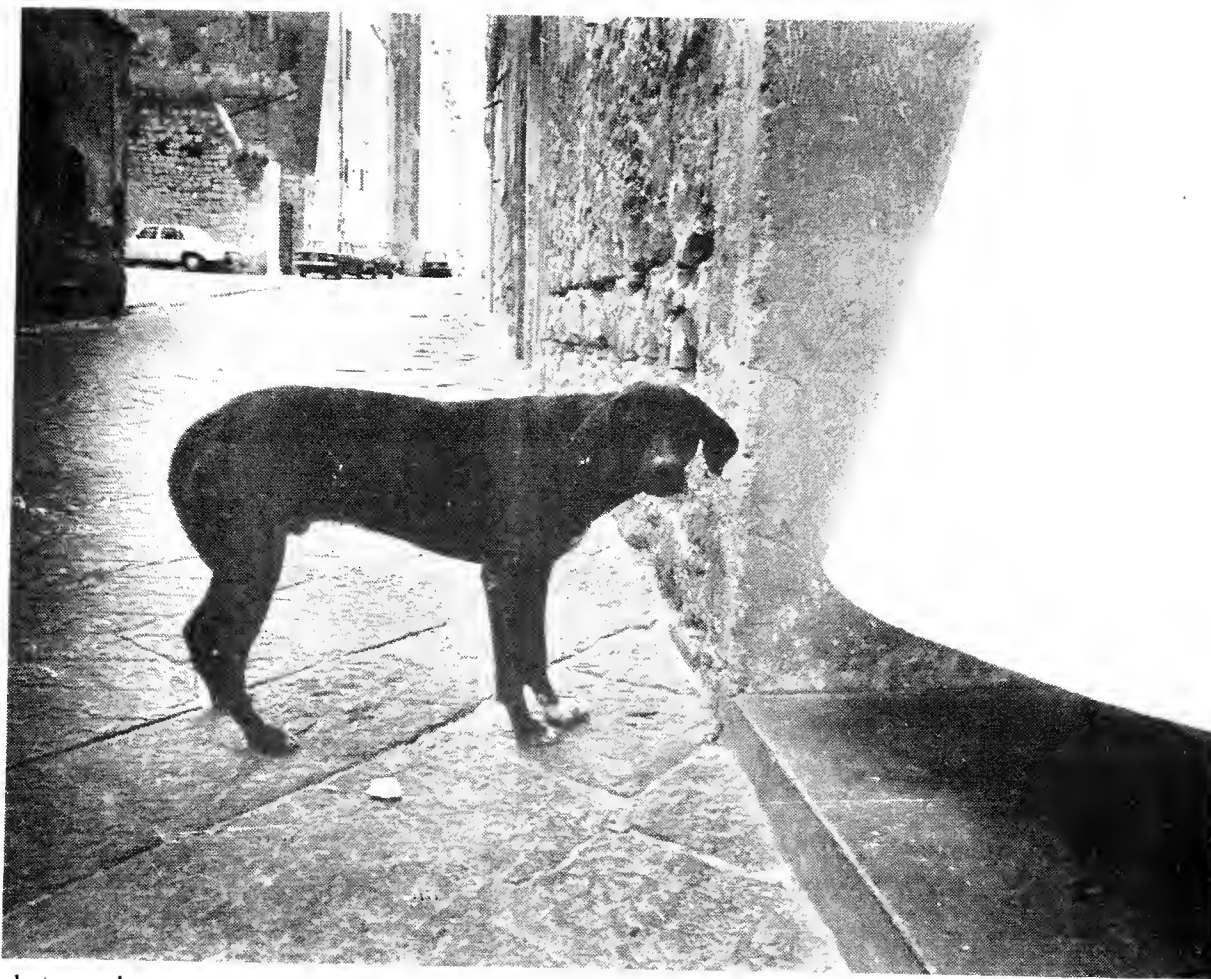
but at the stars
who refuse to show
their faces

Steve R. Dingus

Duplex

Inside the summertime whitewashed livingroom
here the door sighs open to reveal leaves tinged red with chill
I buried my toes in the dog's fur; you sat and laughed
the grass is wet, mutely soaking shoes, harassing cold toes
Telling me about the girl Floy, who built a bar in the basement
a single battered Buick rattles down the street
It was 8th grade — and her parents never knew it was there
in the moment between it's passing and the final backwash of wind
Nor that she snuck out every night, taking several friends and the car with her
the driver is visible, blue turbaned, leaning far forward in the vinyl room
She grew up and travelled about, working with a famous architect
he looks as if he's whispering desperate secrets to the plastic spoked steering wheel.
Came home once, her parents asked her to build them
silverware clatters in the crowded, table cloth covered coffee scent room
A concrete fountain in the back yard — they were staunch republicans
cereal eaten very fast stays coarse and stiff
Then they went away for vacation: their car was quickly replaced by the cement trucks
but the biology teacher waits, among his books and beaks and tiny flies
When they came home, Floy was gone again, but in the back yard, a present
the movie projector expectorates distorted melody
Pink concrete, an amusement park, rollercoasters frozen into immobility
the big bang, done with mirrors and lights
They didn't enjoy the park, didn't realize you could climb on it, bask in the sun
lemurs-raccoon dogs with hands pick and eat insects
The neighbors leaned over the fence and didn't believe
tiny writing covers the blackboard, a map of the progress of a small animal
After some time, a note, thrust in an apron pocket:
Dear Mom, I'm doing what I've always done. Love, Fløy.

Kate Demarest



photograph

Michael Harper

d.c. afternoon

jefferson memorial

lincoln memorial

vietnam the faces all had names

in our yearbook: personality, chessprez
football threefour and there they were
spreading the goodword of dow chemical
to a billion roundfaced people who never
understood american prepackaged democracy
unlike grandfather winner of three purple hearts
distinguished service turret gunner wwtwo but
now he sits in dusty donovan post #1028
nursing a warm carlingsblacklabel and
casually glancing at the legless wonder
three stools down who lost his manhood
somewhere near phan rang thanks to a
boobytrapped vietcong kid asking for rice
looking too much like little brother christ
he never complains which bothers grandfather
leaving him only with nightmares of
empty picture frames above the mantle.

Richard Hutting

At four,

you don't understand why I can't help

but kiss you in the eyes

for you don't know

of your nameless brother

whom we lost

at eight months.

I am impressed

when you remember the dry dead snake

we saw on the black pavement

of the street

when you were eighteen months.

Now, as I push you

high on the ancient swings

you tell me that my father

has told you

that the black hole in the mimosa tree

is for the animals.

Later, sitting on his lap,

you tell him that his tongue

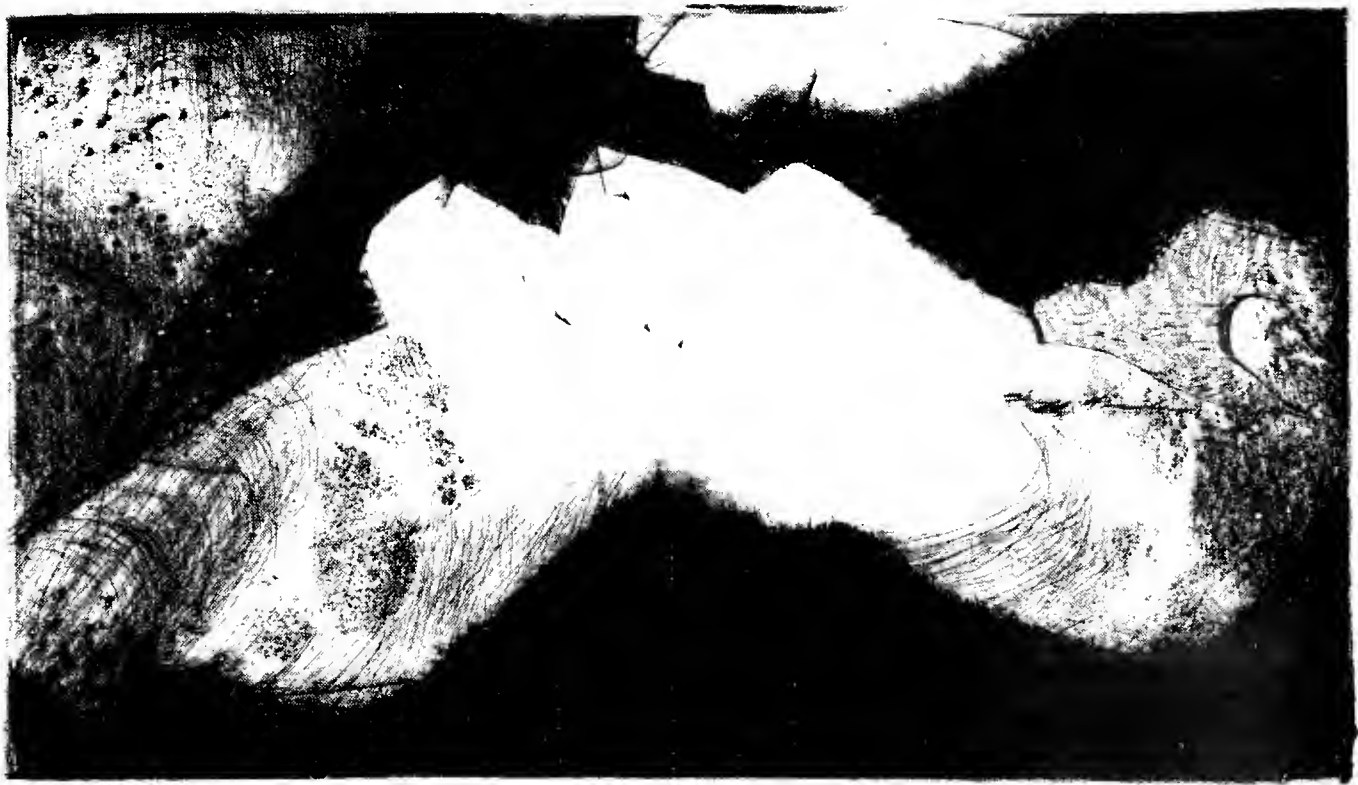
goes all the way out the front door

up the slanting sidewalk

and across the black street

for cars to run over.

Tina Bowyer



intaglio

Kathy Crocetti

Riverwind

"Our river in December"
She cried from an overlook,
"Is naked steel sheathed in ice;"
But I feared she meant,
You've been away too long, away
Too long.

"See how the ice-storms in January,"
She cried at the edge,
"Can be counted like so many silver leaves,
So many sheets of plate-glass,
If you'd only come close;" but I feared
She meant, you daren't try strolling
Across alone.

"Oh, I was a sword of purest steel,"
Raged the river in February,
Cracking up around my lonely barge,
"But you've been gone too long,
Gone too long to know!"

Dan Dervin

Making Bread

Mama's fingers, glazed with royal ointment —
thinly coated as from some ancient sweet residue
(rare and essential) —
Smooth, knowing hands
mold the dough
to be our bread,
mold the substance soft and damp
as if her fingers felt
a beautiful David trapped inside.
She, the sculptor,
gently frees him.

Rose Marie Finney

The Blind and Tiny Bears

The blind and tiny bears
dance,
suspended in a single step,
an unchanging dance
across your bed's quilt.

A quilt whose squares
were incomplete at the death
of your grandmother
but finished by the other
whose eyes were failing.
(I have seen it in others:
the displeasure with a thing
not complete)

You show me these hands' work
and I am not unaffected,
but you know how I feel:
It seems the hands in jealousy conceive
so many things to distract
the mind.

A quilt
and the walls of a house
keep out the cold
and do a good job
but someone says
"the house needs painting
and the paint
needs mixing."

Untitled

This is my ambition:
To sit alone and silent
in a brown winter field
listening to the crow's lonely song
until the earth thaws
and the song has made inside me
the story of a lonely man
that I will tell my sons
when I have gone home.
But who would pay my salary,
provide my daily bread?

Understanding,
you show me this quilt,
this lovely labor
out of the mind
of one grandmother
into the hands of the other.
And the bears
with no eyes
are like the grandmothers
captured in memory
between steps in some other dance.

Dale E. Williams

MERCY MILD IN THE MORNING
A Play in Exactly Three Movements

CHARACTERS

Harold Doze: Adolescent-Young-Adult-Boy. Wears infantile clothing.
Dr. Sleep: An elderly gentleman clothed in Christmas colors. Don't forget a red stocking cap.

*This play is a comedy **

* C.D.

Setting: A small office. In it there is one workdesk and one chair, one couch, and a T.V. tray with a glass and a pitcher of water. Lining the walls and resting on the furniture are some indications of the Christmas season. Sitting at the desk is one Harold Doze and on the couch is one old man with a red nightcap.

HAROLD: (singing)

It was a week just before Christmas, way down in Louisiann,

A little boy was leaning by his bed,

In a manner poised and grand.

I listened as he said his prayers,

his voice came soft and low,

he said, "God, please tell Saint Nicholas,

to send a little snow."

(Harold has choreographed this little ditty to an orchestra of cups, books, and papers that lie on his desk. As he finished, the phone rings.)

HAROLD: Good morning, you have reached Placebo's 24 hour hotline. My name is Harold, would you like to talk? . . . You think you don't love your children? . . . Oh, I'm certain that's not true at all . . . Well, just because your voice sounds er . . . nice, yes, it sounds nice and sweet, Ma'am . . . Nondescript? Why (laughs) I guess it is a rather nondescript word at that. 'Nevertheless, Miss, ush, what did you say your name was? You didn't. Believe me, its totally confidential. I mean, really, how could it be otherwise? . . . You don't think that we're tracing the call, do you? Yes, that's correct, I am the only one here . . . that is, unless Old Saint 'Nick comes in for pre-delivery festivities. (laughs), I don't think he will either. Ma'am, why are you whispering? You hit your son? . . . Erma did . . . Who's Erma? . . . Then she visits you? . . . Erma's never set foot in your house. I thought you said Erma hit your child? . . . No, believe me, I'm not trying to confuse you. I'm just trying to get the facts straight, that's all . . . Ma'am? Ma'am?

(Harold hangs up the phone)

HAROLD: (singing)

I listened as he said his prayers,
his voice came soft and low,
he said, "God, please tell Saint Nicholas
to send a little snow."

(As Harold is singing, the man on the couch has poured a glass of water and gives it to Harold.)

DR. SLEEP: (singing)

I don't know if there'll be snow,
but have a cup of cheer.

(Harold is a changed man. The coolness he maintained on the phone contrasts sharply with the explosion of nerves he now exhibits. Dr. Sleep, who has been knocked on the floor by Harold's spastic arms, laughs.)

HAROLD: Can I help? (lifts him, pauses, then drops him)

DR. SLEEP: Ouch! Right on my LAURELS.

Harold lifts the man and politely shoves him on the couch.

HAROLD: Who are you? Can I help? The offices are closed now, sir.

DR. SLEEP? Oh?

HAROLD: I do believe you have the wrong building.

DR. SLEEP: You do believe, do you?

HAROLD: Yes, and also, also I believe that (looks at watch) in fact, I **know** it's 3 o'clock in the morning. There must be some mistake.

DR. SLEEP: No mistake, Lad. No mistake.

HAROLD: May I ask your business?

DR. SLEEP: Harold, I don't run a business.

HAROLD: Hold it! How did you know my name was Harold? Some thing is very strange here. Very, very, very strange.

DR. SLEEP: Relax. Stress tends to shrink the bollocks. I know your name as I heard it spoken by your own person not half a minute ago.

HAROLD: I did not say my name! Who are you?

DR. SLEEP: Relax. I believe the recitation is "My name is Harold, would you like to talk?"

HAROLD: Oh, yea. That's right. (mocking himself) "My

name is Harold, would you like to talk?"

DR. SLEEP: Feel better?

HAROLD: I feel better. Do you mind if I ask you a simple question?

DR. SLEEP: Please do.

HAROLD: Who are you?

DR. SLEEP: Don't you think that you should answer the telephone first?

HAROLD: What?

DR. SLEEP: The phone. It appears to be ringing off the hook.

HAROLD: This phone, right?

DR. SLEEP: That's correct. You know — "b-bb-b-bb-b-bb-b."

HAROLD: You're deaf as well. This phone is not ringing. Deaf and crazy — that's what you are.

DR. SLEEP: I guess some lads just need the volume turned up a bit. How's this, love? (points to the phone, claps once, the phone rings)

HAROLD: (shocked) My god. My good godly god gosh. (grabs phone) Yes? Oh yes, this is the Placebo Hotline, can I help you? Be nicer to the man with the stocking cap on. Sure, why not. (hangs up) This is definitely some elaborate fantasy cooked up in my subconscious — a dream. It's got to be a dream. (hangs head against the desk) Wake up, Harold.

DR. SLEEP: If it's any consolation, I'm no figment of your imagination. (pinches his own cheek) See?

HAROLD: Too strange. I think I'm going to have a nervous breakdown . . .

DR. SLEEP: Don't be dramatic, Harold; save that for when you get back to Summer College, where you are currently wrapping the trimmings on a theater major.

HAROLD: I'm not hearing this. I'm not.

DR. SLEEP: Well, it's no wonder, the way you listen to your portable stereo so loud.

HAROLD: Jesus!

DR. SLEEP: Funny you should mention him. You aren't an overly religious person. In fact, of all things, you're a

Lutheran.

HAROLD: Of all the times for me to star in "The Twilight Zone." Forgive me, sir. Mother, mother!!

DR. SLEEP: Your mother lives on the West Coast. I suggest you use a telephone instead of straining your lungs.

Harold is speechless. Dr. Sleep chuckles, grins.

DR. SLEEP: Harold, you are a strange sort. Why are you terrified of me? Of all the people you could be deathly scared of, you pick me: a smallish, old geezer who has difficulty raising the fork that feeds him.

Harold doesn't appear to know what to do. He goes through different physical positions all advertising the confusion in his mind. Finally, he speaks.

HAROLD: I've never met anyone like you before.

DR. SLEEP: Revelation.

HAROLD: You seem to be taking this all too lightly, sir. I mean, even if you can't observe the situation as an innocent bystander, surely you can see the confusion I'm in.

DR. SLEEP: And what confusion could this be, my lad?

HAROLD: As to who or what you are — dear God, you made the phone ring! That, no matter what you say, is not normal behaviour. Can you at least see that?

DR. SLEEP: What is normality? Are you pronouncing yourself an authority on this subject? If so, pray mean, produce your credentials. (laughs)

HAROLD: I'm at the end of my rope. Logic doesn't work with you. Rational thought is beyond the horizon at this point. I am at the end of my rope.

DR. SLEEP: A suitable surrender for a drama major, I'd say.

HAROLD: Well, what do you suggest I do? Maybe you haven't been around Planet Earth for long. Maybe you are completely fresh to any human but me. That's it! You're an alien! Ha! And although your people thought that they taught you well — giving you full ability in the three American virtues — language, pretension, and idleness — they neglected something quite important.

(Harold feels omniscient, Dr. Sleep is having a ball) They forgot that humans can't read one another's thoughts.

DR. SLEEP: Their only mistake.

HAROLD: So you admit it! Well, I'm glad the truth is out.

DR. SLEEP: Ah, I as well. But alas, Harold, how do you explain my manipulation of the phone?

HAROLD: (worried) That's right! I didn't realize that that was standard alien procedure — I guess I was wrong. If any thing, your people are advanced.

DR. SLEEP: But Mr. Harold, how do you explain that it's not just a manipulation of wires that makes the phone ring? Say for instance, a wire, here (tugs at a spot in the air, Harold looks for wires, gives up when Dr. Sleep begins chuckling).

DR. SLEEP: (suddenly putting on a serious face) Harold?

HAROLD: Yes?

DR. SLEEP: Are you frightened?

HAROLD: I really don't know, should I be?

DR. SLEEP: I don't know. Did you find a wire to the phone?

HAROLD: No, no I didn't.

DR. SLEEP: Ah, my lad, I would have sheer terror at this point.

HAROLD: Why!

DR. SLEEP: Just set your thinking faster. We have seen that I have the ability to transmit electrical stimulations without wires. Directing electrical energy to the tiniest specific point imaginable — a telephone component. The question I pose, and purely hypothetically, I assure you, is whether it could be used on the human nervous system. Maybe sending a wrong impulse to a foot or hand, or increasing stimulation to facial muscles practiced enough on humans of a significantly low caliber. I could in essence, control a person physically.

HAROLD: Wow . . . uh, do you think you'd ever do it? Have you ever done it?

DR. SLEEP: To the latter question: no, I haven't done it. But to the former, I'm rather torn as to whether I would

or not. Although the very ability to control someone by mental power makes me feel guilty just for possessing it, the concept could be very useful for certain political systems.

HAROLD: Fascism, government dictatorships —

DR. SLEEP: Please don't talk politics.

HAROLD: But you yourself —

DR. SLEEP: I'm beginning to actually hate politics, my lad. Please don't try my patience by rattling off on a useless subject. I hate politics almost as much as people. (This last line he says under his breath.)

Harold is looking disturbed.

DR. SLEEP: Harold?

HAROLD: Yes?

DR. SLEEP: Am I making much sense to you?

HAROLD: I really don't know.

DR. SLEEP: Bless you, in all your ignorance. Oh, Harold, Harold, Harold, I get so tired sometimes — of people — they get old so fast.

HAROLD: I'm afraid I still don't know what you're saying.

DR. SLEEP: Well, let me put it like this. Say you're a toddler. An adult places you in a room with your peers and distributes one toy to each of you. Some kids get balls, others dolls, etc. Unlike everybody else, you are bestowed a toy that has the possibility of being used maliciously, against the other children. Now, I'm not saying you'd use this toy for that purpose, but the temptation remains. Actually, it's more of a curiosity.

PAUSE

DR. SLEEP: I just want to realize my potential. Why, I could even assume the role of a glorified murderer, say like, Bela Lugosi, Boris Karlof, or the Roadrunner. Only my method would be totally without evidence. An electrical impulse sent directly opposite the natural pulses that control the heartbeat. There would be approximately 30 seconds of high frequency beating, the aorta would

split from pressure, and the heart would be more like jello than muscle. All without evidence. The perfect murder.

HAROLD: Perfect.

PAUSE

DR. SLEEP: Harold?

HAROLD: Yes?

DR. SLEEP: Harold, I probably shouldn't do this, but —

HAROLD: Do what?

DR. SLEEP: Cancel our little pun.

HAROLD: What do you mean — "Our little pun?"

DR. SLEEP: I don't know where to begin . . . I must find the appropriate place. Harold, Harold, my lad. I am probably going to crush you with this, but I'm not an alien.

HAROLD: You're not?

DR. SLEEP: In reality, I'm extremely human, almost too much so.

HAROLD: If that confession was designed to comfort me, it didn't for some reason.

DR. SLEEP: Am I so different?

HAROLD: It's not a matter of being different, it's not that at all. It's a matter of trust. If you have the ability to make men into zombies with a mere look, it's kind of hard for anybody, myself included to dismiss the possibility of you using that power, even if just on a momentary impulse.

DR. SLEEP: I would never do such a thing on a momentary impulse.

HAROLD: But you might do it all the same.

DR. SLEEP: I didn't say that, Lad.

HAROLD: It came through loud and clear.

PAUSE

DR. SLEEP: If I told you who I was . . . would you believe me?

HAROLD: I suppose.

DR. SLEEP: In a strange way, I really think you will. Ah,

but Lad, let me just look at you . . . I want to see your face before and after you know the truth.

HAROLD: This sounds serious.

DR. SLEEP: Serious? What I am going to tell you is deadly so. A secret kept from millions, and about to be revealed to you. And only you.

HAROLD: Shall I sit down?

DR. SLEEP: If you wish.

HAROLD: Okay.

DR. SLEEP: Harold, who defies the laws of time and gravity every year?

HAROLD: I don't know.

DR. SLEEP: Me. Who has millions of people spreading hope in a stereotypical image of himself?

HAROLD: I would have to say Jesus, but I have a feeling the answer's you.

DR. SLEEP: Jesus. Well, I stand corrected. The second most popular stereotypical image.

HAROLD: Go on.

DR. SLEEP: Let me see . . . who is the oldest man on this earth?

HAROLD: George Burns.

DR. SLEEP: Not by a long shot. How old is he anyway? 80? 85? I'm proud to say that the person you see before you has been alive for sixteen hundred years. Although I know he doesn't look it.

HAROLD: You don't.

DR. SLEEP: All right lad, my last clues. My first residence was as a bishop of Myra, in Asia Minor. Shortly after that I became pretty generalized and was only distinguished by restoring to life three little boys who had been chopped into pieces and put in a pickle jar. Later, I performed a less precedented service. I gave gold to the daughters of a poor man, and consequently saved them from a life of prostitution. This caught on, and made me excessively popular with a much younger crowd. My work has been pretty steady since then.

HAROLD: I haven't the foggiest idea.

PAUSE

DR. SLEEP: (singing)

You better not pout, you better not cry, you better not shout, I'm telling you why . . .

HAROLD: No

Dr. Sleep nods his head.

BLACKOUT

Setting: Same scene, five minutes later.

HAROLD: Say, "ho, ho, ho."

DR. SLEEP: Harold . . .

HAROLD: Please, it's something I've always wanted to hear.

DR. SLEEP: It's absurd, that's behind me . . . my past.

HAROLD: Come on! For old times sake! Hey, if you don't I'll always remember you from the sound of those lovely animated Christmas specials.

DR. SLEEP: Good God. Okay. (Slowly, distinct emphasis between the words) "Ho, ho, ho."

Harold laughs. The Dr. clears his throat and lightly pounds his chest.

DR. SLEEP: Is it *that* funny?

HAROLD: Only when I listen.

DR. SLEEP: Oh, thank God for that!

HAROLD: May I call you Santa or Mr. Claus or whatever you go by?

DR. SLEEP: Back home Jim and Robert, my top management elves, call me Santie. I guess that's the one I'm most used to.

HAROLD: You're kidding! Do you really have elves?

DR. SLEEP: Yes, I have elves. But they are not the cute creatures most people think of. They are more a combination of Mickey Roonies and Ernest Borgnines. Kind of scary to meet in the dark, I might add.

HAROLD: Are elves as they say? Are they good workers?

DR. SLEEP: I've been lucky because I've had a great staff. Jim really knows how to whip up morale. He's been

with me since that Christopher Columbus thing — longest employee. Robert is Jim's right hand, even though he's only been here since the premiere of the *Rite of Spring*. They have about five thousand workers under them, and we usually get along fine in terms of getting the job finished in time for the mid-December warning.

HAROLD: How's Mrs. Claus?

DR. SLEEP: I'm a widower. My wife committed suicide in 1498.

HAROLD: Do you have many friends up there? — I'm assuming that you live on the North Pole . . .

DR. SLEEP: Not really, Harold. I've got Jim but he's extremely busy. You're the only person I've disclosed my identity to. Well, actually, no, that's not true. I did tell an Eskimo a few decades back. But as it turned out, he had motor aphasia, a speech disorder, and couldn't tell his family anyway. I read a lot. Sew some, too.

HAROLD: Do you really have a list of boys and girls that you check twice?

DR. SLEEP: I've never had a list, just a good memory. What I can't remember we store on microfilm. Harold, I'm beginning to feel like this is twenty questions.

HAROLD: Oh, come on, you can sympathize with this curiosity. It's unprecedented.

Dr. Sleep gives him a wry look.

HAROLD: Just one more question. Do you get a feeling of delight or warmth when you hear the fragile puff-puffs of the millions of children awaiting your arrival?

DR. SLEEP: No.

HAROLD: No?! Why not?!

DR. SLEEP: Because nothing is simple anymore. Nothing was ever simple. Everybody has this vision of children innocently waiting for treats that will make their hearts go "beep-de-beep-de-beep". I'll tell you something, their hearts pound like crazy it's true. But there is no spirit.

HAROLD: Spirit? You mean Christmas spirit?

DR. SLEEP: Yes! Christmas spirit! It's kind of ironic that such a term should be applied to such an ego-gratifying day, don't you think? I remember a couple of years ago

when the Saturday Evening Post started putting Norman Rockwell on their covers. Today, whenever a middle-aged couple watched their teenager going through the Sears catalogue writing down item numbers, they think of when they were young . . . and that pops into their heads? Norman Rockwell. Norman Rockwell. That bloody guy makes a perfectly melodramatic picture and the press says, "realistic, truly American." Silly, if you ask me.

HAROLD: So your complaint is against tradition?

DR. SLEEP: Good God, no. It's extremely hard for me to convey it in black and white terms, Harold. I mean, I have been asking myself the same question for centuries. "Why don't people **mean** it at Christmas?" The answer gets more distant as time passes. I really don't know why.

HAROLD: I'm beginning to understand.

DR. SLEEP: If only you truly did, my lad. If only you truly did.

PAUSE

Ahhh! I think I've got it. Why do people acknowledge the existence of a love force yet shy away when it gets so near? The answer — apathy is king.

HAROLD: Santie, do you mean to tell me that you've always felt this way?

DR. SLEEP: I suppose so . . . yes, I suppose, yes, I have.

HAROLD: That's so sad. I feel an immense weight in my gut just now, and I think I know why.

DR. SLEEP: Are you angry at me, Harold?

HAROLD: Why should I be?

For destroying an essential love manifestation.

HAROLD: I don't quite follow.

DR. SLEEP: For destroying a myth — for destroying myself. Is that a little clearer?

HAROLD: I think that you are taking this just a little bit too seriously. After all, your actual occupation is merely the transportation of toys . . .

DR. SLEEP: Transportation of toys!

HAROLD: I'm sorry I meant —

DR. SLEEP: I know what you meant, lad. Believe me, I

know. It's all as pure as the driven snow, now, it is. I'm just a stock worker — moving merchandise across the hemispheres, and announcing his pitstops with a "ho, ho, ho!" Give the people what they want, and what they want is toys, right? Of course, these toys range everywhere from Raggedy-Ann dolls to fine wines, depending upon one's level of maturity!!

HAROLD: But Santie, I just wanted to make you face the truth.

DR. SLEEP: (laughs) To make me face the truth? (laughs) Oh well, they say a man isn't quite a man till he can look in a mirror and accurately express existence.

PAUSE

My, I sound preachy, don't I?

HAROLD: You do.

DR. SLEEP: I guess it's time for action, then.

HAROLD: What action?

DR. SLEEP: The action that I'm about to take against you.

HAROLD: Against **me**? (laughing) What do you mean?

DR. SLEEP: Let me rephrase for you.

HAROLD: Please do.

DR. SLEEP: Over the past few centuries, I've become increasingly distressed with my fellow men. Repetition of anything is nerve-racking — what mankind has done is pulled off the most prolonged annoyance known to this universe. If the word is love, people are not following it in the least.

I remember when my wife died about five centuries ago. We had a fairly simple funeral. Jim, my top elf, and I garnished her and put her on an oversized tabbogan. We pushed her into the arctic sea. That evening, Jim and I took the Grand Sled to Italy, to get away. As we parked the sled beside a Gondolla, I heard some children playing. It was Christmas in Venice, and they were having impersonating my late wife and me. As we watched, a young tough approached the children and told them to not

waste time, Santa doesn't exist. I had to hold myself back. But that wasn't the clincher — and at this moment I almost cried — with the same conviction with which they believed in me they effortlessly accepted the young man's advice. I don't think I've ever been the same since.

PAUSE

I'm sorry, Harold. It seems that that wasn't an explanation. Oh God, I think I'm going to be very sad.

HAROLD: Santie?

DR. SLEEP: Love is not any good unless its affirmed, For far too long now, I've had no affirmation. And we all need it, don't we? Even the people we put on pedestals. I need a response. Something to prove my existence. I'm . . . I'm through with love. I think that . . . I will try hate for a bit.

PAUSE

HAROLD: Where do I come in?

DR. SLEEP: Right up front. Center stage. An audience participation number.

(Harold looks at Dr. Sleep for a few seconds, then breaks into a run. He is soon stopped by Dr. Sleep's gaze, though, and collapses onto the couch.)

HAROLD: God damn you!

DR. SLEEP: Do you think he would dare?

HAROLD: Leave me alone, please. I don't like pain.

DR. SLEEP: No one does, my lad. It's such an unpleasant feeling. However, that doesn't mean that it's less necessary.

HAROLD: (laughing) This is really a good joke, but don't you think we've had enough? The phone might ring . . . in fact, I'm expecting a call.

DR. SLEEP: Your caller will be same as all the others — manic depressants. Don't worry, I'll take the message. Now, now, now Harold. Let's look a little more humble, eh? That face won't win you the contents of a Christmas

stocking. Nor will it win you your next breath.

HAROLD: Dear God.

(Dr. Sleep touches Harold's chest. Harold shows signs of excessive excruciating pain.)

HAROLD: Dear God.

(Harold collapses, dies.)

DR. SLEEP: Dear boy.

BLACKOUT

Setting: Directly after preceding blackout.

DR. SLEEP: (Standing alone and addressing the heavens)

I feel as if I've walked one million miles,
delivering gifts and facing my trials,
it's come to the point where I couldn't care less,
So what do I do? I malfunction his chest.

He's the first one, bloody well true.
I played with his mind, and look what he do.
He takes me as Santa without suit of red,
It's a shame for his parents that their young boy is
dead.

My solution is simple; it's really first rate:
Gentlemen, Ladies, I give you loving from hate.

And it works.

As the last reverberation of this line fades quickly, the phone rings, and Dr. Sleep lifts the receiver to his ear as the play comes to a

FINISH

Craig Dietz

Worlds

Last night as I lay beside you
a Summer rainstorm broke inside my head.
The drops fell large and cold freezing my eyes in the darkness.
I was a little boy again, racing sticks down the gutter.
You were the girl next door trying not to get her new dress wet.

When the storm cleared
the sun cut a purple canyon through the towering clouds.
High up a thin line of blue sky trickled like a river.

This morning.
The gutter is dry and cracked,
the dress doesn't fit anymore
and all the next doors closed
when we tore down the neighborhood.

Scott Stableford

For Poe

Intensity, brevity mark the hour when dreams
come to call and
doors shut so silently upon hushed pillows, my wall
stained with remembrances of one
(like blood from the butchered brute)
left behind after the sale).

Rose Marie Finney

For the Immaculate Conception

I don't want anyone
to admire
my pants in a museum,
snarled Chopin.

Well, yes, but
even before inflation
he couldn't know

What price immortality.

Daryl Lease

Good Fences

and it is night
cricket-raining
voices of fishermen along the road
from the lake
where they walked.
For the millionth time
i ask
where are you
and no one answers.

and it is day
featherlit
they say in fields with high populations
of meadow voles
(mi-cro-tus-penn-syl-van-i-cus)
you can lay down in
tall grass
and hear stalk-chewing.

and it is dusk
soyoureback
into my empty glass you pour the gin
that is my weakness
knowing full well that
you are my other.

Anne M. Baber



acrylic on paper

Ellen Spencer

Night Service

Mass was at the cemetery.
Candles were set atop
the headstones, so worshipers
would not trip over graven
remembrances.
Eve of All Saints-
a good night to celebrate
in darkness,
amongst the dead.

Dried leaves scratched against
old stone walls
and forced the mind
to turn to thoughts of worms
squirming through decayed carcasses
of ones loved.

The priest, in his robes of white
seemed weak
in the midst of all the dark
that surrounded.
An old woman had once told him
that there was nothing to fear
of those already dead.
He wanted us to believe.

Wisps of steam
crept from within the mouths
of the choir outward into
evening black
as they sang
"The Lord has conquered sin
and death."

I sat and watched
as believers approached
the cardtable altar
and tasted the blood and flesh
of their god.

Larry Hinders

Untitled

When the dogs came here to live,
You disappeared,
But you're not gone.
You leave the muddy roses of your footprints
On the windshield.
You play discordant Chopin
In the middle of the night.
You leave your long, black hairs
In the clean sock drawer.
And no matter how often we fill your dish,
It's always empty.
Sometimes we know we've just missed you
Because we find,
Every now and again,
A warm indentation
In a pillow.

Connie Smith

Literary Ties

I have always felt great sympathy for the lookers-on,
the female confidantes, the Stingoes,
the Charles Ryders of the world,
whose lives (for a while) are a magic golden dream.

Then the glamour people burn up or out, and go —
while we are left, reading and hoping
for another visitation from that other world —
the one we glimpse but briefly,
and always as a guest.

I feel another J. Alfred —
I am neither Hamlet, Ophelia,
nor some swell attendant lord.
I am the reader, the audience, the looker-on.
I too have measured out my life
with (plastic) coffee spoons.

Do I dare? Dare I dare?
Not so bad to dread the ridicule of public folly,
but the dread of having secret fears
proved overwhelming true — a Lady Jim.

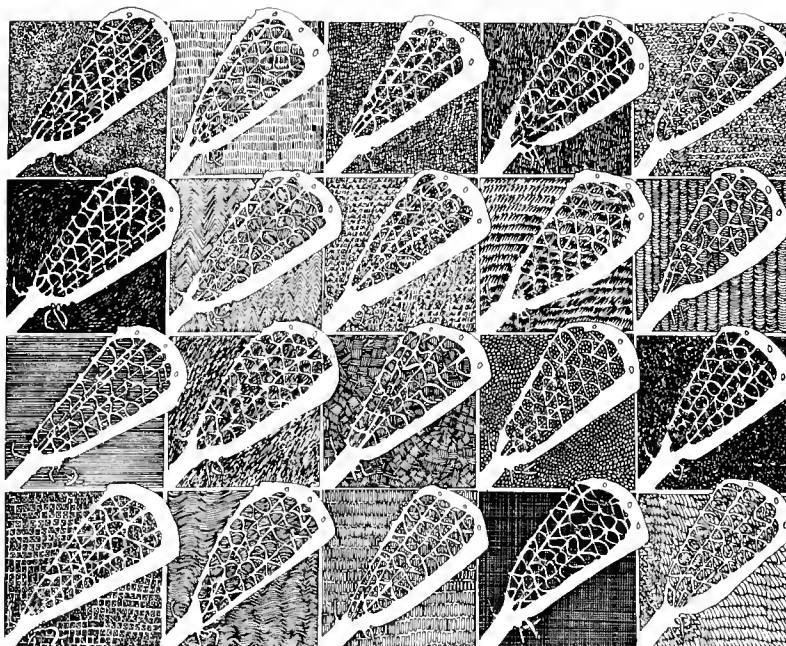
Almost better to eternally, cowardly
vacillate, between closed speech and open silence,
and notice the effects of light on others.

Katherine Spivey

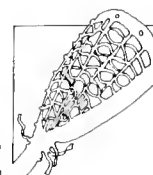


ink and brush

Scott Ligon

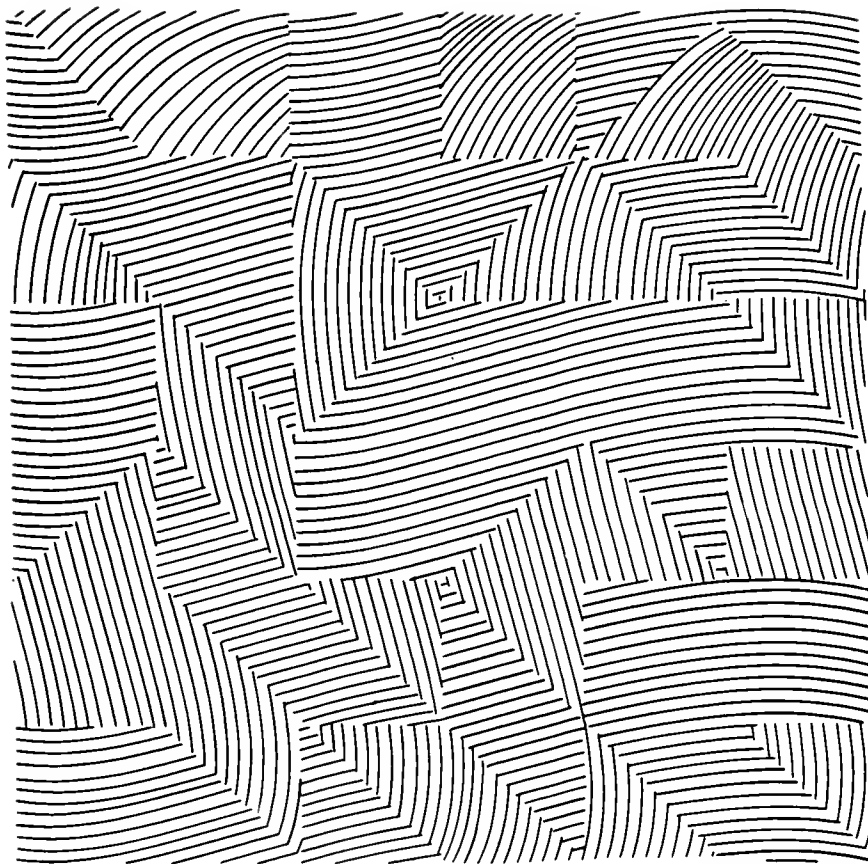


LACROSSE STICKS BY BRINE



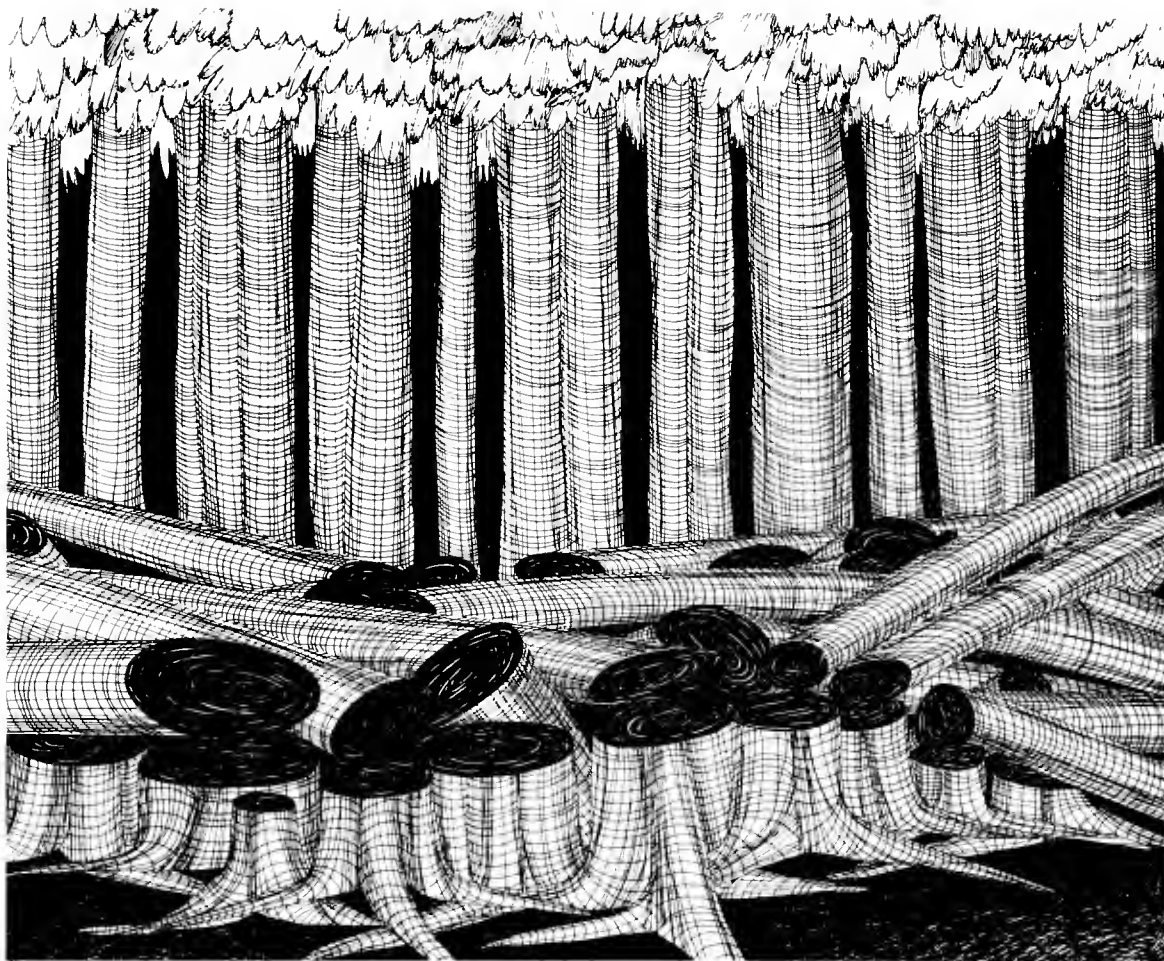
ink

Tina Bowyer



ink

Gail Giampaoli



Study of a Forest
ink and felt marker

Tina Bowyer

CORRIGENDA

- P. 9 "Pallor Manor" should be "Pallor Manner."
- P. 32 The poem that begins "At four," should have "Untitled" above it.
- P. 34 The Blind and Tiny Bears" should not have "Untitled" in the middle of it.
- P. 44 "For Poe" should not have a parentheses after "brute."

